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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT AU PRINCE 001792

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SUBJECT: PROFILE OF HAITI'S STUDENT MOVEMENT SINCE THE
DEPARTURE OF ARISTIDE

1.(U) Summary: Opposition to former President Aristide united student groups in 2003-04 and created an integrated and powerful street movement. Since the departure of Aristide, the cast of student organizations remains mostly unchanged, though they are more divided than during the anti-Aristide movement. Most student leaders are laying low, fearful of chimere gangs who have vowed to target students for their role in ousting Aristide. Septel reports further on the political opinions and activities of the wider student and youth movement. Below is a list of the principal student organizations and leaders as of summer, 2005. End Summary.

12. (SBU) Federation of Haitian University Students (FEUH) -- The FEUH is the largest university student organization, founded in 1999 as a successor to foundering pro-Lavalas FNEH (National Federation of Haitian Students), which protested against the Cedras regime. Leadership of the FEUH is often a stepping stone into politics, vaulting student leaders Prince Sonson Pierre, Gerald Gilles and Lans Clones to fame and Senatorial seats in the 1990s. Recent FEUH President Herve Saintilus was unseated in May, 2004 and is now campaigning actively for a Gonaives Depute seat. After a falling out with Aristide in 2000-01, the FEUH became close to G184 and other civil society organizations. Current President, Robert Gessy, is an uncharismatic moderate, lacking support from students in the north, and more interested in attending conferences than taking to the streets. FEUH representatives are pro-elections, scared of the pro-Lavalas thugs bent on revenge, and eager to get rid of Haiti's crusty political class in favor of an (as yet absent) inspirational new leader. Their priorities are educational reform, youth employment and pressure on the IGOH for action, albeit in a "non-destabilizing manner."

13. (SBU) Grand Front National des Etudiants Haitiens (GRAFNEH) -- Allied with the business sector, GRAFNEH formed around ex-Initiative Citoyenne leader, Claude Joseph, during winter protests of 2003-04 and has quickly gained respect as an active, responsible pressure group. Unlike most student organizations that have trouble coming to a meeting of minds with international organizations for funding, GRAFNEH has worked with UNESCO on student interests, received an IGOH grant for a weekly radio program on Radio Ginen, and most recently secured a grant from the National Endowment for Democracy (in alliance with the Fondation Espoir of Liberal Party candidate, Hans Tippenhaeur) to monitor candidates and disseminate information on elections platforms. The group is responsible for a handful of student protests that occurred since the departure of Aristide. The demonstrations, always organized and officially declared, are in Joseph's words "to hold the government responsible for the transition that we fought so hard for."

14. (SBU) Committe de Crise (CdC) -- The CdC no longer exists, but its actions during the movement against Aristide still reverberate today. Formed by Haitian State University (UEH) students to organize increasingly intense protests in response the December 5, 2003 attack on students, the CdC was for a short time the strategic nucleus of the anti-Aristide student movement. Following the departure of Aristide, the CdC collapsed when several of the leaders were integrated into low level IGOH positions (Emmanuel Jean Francois, one of the leaders of the CdC, reportedly works under Youri Latortue at the Primature). Those who remained found little to unite them. The most aggressive CdC faction from the Business Faculty (INAGHEI) left the CdC in early 2004 in a dispute over the naming of a spokesperson. They later made a movie, "Atila," suggesting INAGHEI had led the entire student movement against Aristide, further dividing student community. The nail in the coffin for the CdC came in December 2004, when one faction was accused of misusing funds destined for a one-year commemoration of the attack on students that gave rise to the CdC.

15. (SBU) Association des Etudiants Victimes (ASEV) -- The more somber shell of the 2004 student movement, ASEV is an alliance that seeks reparations for students who were wounded

or killed during the anti-Aristide protests. Loosely defined to include students who suffered "mental harm," the group has had little success in achieving its goals, despite the IGOH's establishment of a Commission to Aid Victims, led by Former FEUH President and Gonaives candidate Saintilus, specifically charged with addressing the demands of the injured students. The commission failed to disperse any compensation and Saintilus resigned in a fit of self-promoting protest, leaving ASEV to continue the fight, in the media and occasionally on the streets, for reparations from the IGOH. The IGOH's refusal to pick up the pieces from the Commission to address the victims from the student movement against Aristide will continue to be a sore spot. Most students are on the edge regarding the IGOH and this is their most sensitive issue.

16. (SBU) A number of other student groups that formed part of the Anti-Aristide coalition remain active, though focused primarily on educational and internal issues. Others have sprouted with the help of new IGOH connections or as a vehicle for self-promotion of aspiring candidates. However, few of these groups have shown the ability or interest thus far in mobilizing members politically since Aristide's departure:

-- Grand Rassemblement National des Etudiants Haitiens (GRANDEH) led by Reginald Dorvil is a well-organized, potentially influential group of students from the more-radical INAGHEI faculty. The group has made several statements via the press, but few public displays.

-- Students from the Faculty of Human Sciences have on occasion risen to the attention of the press. The faculty is divided into two camps: the relatively activist MEGAH and the more moderate Force 17.

-- Mouvement des Jeunes pour l'Evolution et l'Unite Nationales (MOJEUNE), led by polished soon-to-be Cap Haitien Senate candidate Roosevelt Rosier, has a modest following in the north, but more PR skills than raw numbers.

-- After Herve Saintilus was ousted as president of the FEUH, he hijacked students from the Artibonite to form Centre Pour le Promotion d'un Nouveau Citoyen Haitien (CEPNOCH), ostensibly interested in socioeconomic development but in practice primarily a publicity vehicle for Saintilus who is omnipresent at any student event covered by the media.

-- Action de Jeunes (AJ) is a "group for social action" formed with much support from the IGOH (Ministries of Culture and Education, Secretary of State for Literacy, and Conseil des Sages member Christian Rousseau). The group receives training from the Institute Mobile d'Education Democratique (IMED) and other resources but has thus far not generated the notice the IGOH hoped for.

GRIFFITHS